

Camera Club Competitions - Tips & Tricks

The purpose of a competition is primarily to see if your photography is improving, to learn how the judge thinks you can improve your particular photograph and to observe and learn from the comments he or she gives fellow photographers in the competition. Remember, a competition is mainly a learning experience - the judge offers an opinion, and that is always **subjective**.

Photography is a passion and you can be proud of the photos you take. Some of you might be thinking, "My photos aren't good enough" to enter competitions. So, what better way to get feedback and learn how to improve? Keep entering, but don't forget the feedback is just one person's personal view. You are your own best judge, don't let anyone discourage you from hanging up your photos in your home or sharing them on various social media platforms.

Tips for Entering:

- Follow instructions regarding file format, size and resolution.
- Ensure you understand the theme and ask your fellow members / committee if you have any questions or need ideas.
- Keep it simple and don't feel compelled to enter the maximum number of photos allowed unless you feel as though you have equally good snapshots for the judges to review.
- Be creative to make the picture more interesting. A photographer who is aware of unique colours, angles, shapes, patterns, and lines often scores well with judges.
- Browse the gallery on the Camera Club website to get an idea of previous submitted images for the same theme / similar themes
- Relax: Entering photo contests can be intimidating, but you shouldn't let your nerves get the best of you. Once you have submitted your work you are then at the mercy of the judges. Don't let the feedback deter you from entering again. Rather, examine the competitions winning images and apply what you learn to your next photo session.

How to Choose your Best Photo

Choose a picture that is simple in nature. Concentrate on choosing an image that is technically well done. Before submitting, review it for the following:

- **Sharp focus:** This will help show details of the subject.
- **Composition:** Pay attention to the composition. Follow the rule of thirds, but do not be afraid to experiment.
- **Colours:** Balance supplies harmony to an image. Be realistic with the colour and know that sometimes a more subtle colour can work well. Black & whites work great if the contrast is strong between the blacks and the whites. In some cases, vibrant colours will help to draw the judges' attention.
- **Contrast:** Good contrast is important, especially in black and white images.
- **Lighting:** Ensure good lighting on the subject.
- **For- and Background:** A cluttered or unattractive background can be a distraction. Don't forget to level your horizon.
- **Subject:** An interesting subject will help to increase the overall appearance of the photo. Try telling a story with your image to evoke the viewer's imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.
- **Similar entries:** Don't compete against yourself and cull your photos to include unique entries.